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An Exploration of the Goajira Peninsula, U.S. of Colombia.

By F. A. A. Simons.

Map, p. 840.

Since the publication of my last paper on the Sierra Nevada in 1881,* I have been commissioned by the National Government of Colombia to survey the two Atlantic States of the *Magdalena and Bolivar*, and especially to write a report on the hitherto unexplored region of the Goajira Indians. A summary of this I have now the honour of laying before the Royal Geographical Society.

The north-easterly corner of the United States of Colombia (formerly New Granada) terminates in a large peninsula, that, projecting for some 120 miles out into the Caribbean Sea, forms the extensive Gulf of Maracaybo. This peninsula is known as the Goajira. It was ceded by the State of Magdalena in 1872, to form a National Territory, for the better civilisation of its Indians. One half of it, however, is claimed by the Venezuelans, and a dispute that at one time threatened to culminate in war between the two nations, was amicably settled by referring the question to the King of Spain as arbitrator. His decision has not yet been made public. Three-fourths surrounded by sea, the Goajira is on the land, or south-westerly, side separated from the State of the Magdalena by a natural boundary, formed partly by the Rio Ranchoria, with the outlying hills of the Nevada, variously called in old maps Cerros de Soblado, de Barrancas, &c., and partly by the Montes of Oca.

Very little or nothing is known of the history of these Indians. Although the peninsula played an important part in the first discoveries, none of the early chroniclers seem to have paid much attention to the country. Juan de Castellanos, who resided some time at the Cabo de la Vela, dedicates a "solo canto" to the pearls. The "Floresta de Santa Marta," written by José Nicolas de la Rosa in 1789, gives many interesting data on the customs and manners of the Indians; this work must have supplied the more recent writings on the subject, for the same errors run through them all. That the present race are not the original inhabitants of the peninsula is certain. The Indians themselves have a legend that they came from a great distance, and are able to point out traces of villages belonging to the former inhabitants, whom they assert are the Arhuacos of the Sierra Nevada. Sometimes their old graves are accidentally come across, yielding to the fortunate finder a rich harvest of *tumas* (pieces of polished stone with a hole drilled through), curiously shaped pieces of gold, and other ornaments (clay), identical with those found in great profusion all over the Sierra Nevada. Now,

* 'Proceedings R. G. S.,' 1881, p. 705.

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As a last word I may say from personal experience that the Goajira is an interesting but not a beautiful country, nor is it a desirable place for travelling, either for pleasure or for commerce. Not that there is any actual danger under ordinary circumstances, but what between drunken bloodthirsty Indians, blood- and tear-money, with all the intricacies of their own peculiar laws, travelling among them is as bad as sitting on a keg of gunpowder before a big fire. It is impossible to foretell when a mere spark, accidentally or intentionally, may blow the whole thing up.

APPENDIX.

List of Tribes or Castes, with their respective animals and favourite resting-places.

Uriana ..	Canahapur	Tiger	About Taroa and Bahia Honda.
" ..	Arpana	Rabbit	About Cuco and Maracaybo coast.
" ..	Guinpiral	A singing bird ..	Everywhere.
" ..	Hokórtu	Gecko (lizard) ..	Only in the plains.
Epéyá ..	Guaruscche	A species of vulture	Bahia Honda, Puerto Estrella, and plains.
Pushaina ..	Pulche ..	A species of small peccary.	Pensahi, Atalpa, and plains.
Ipuana ..	Mushard ..	A sort of hawk ..	Portete Joroy, Ciapana, &c.
Jayarid ..	Er ..	Dog	Macuira and plains.
Jusayd ..	Kashaurle	Rat-snake	Tota, Hayaro.
Arpushaina ..	Samur ..	Vulture	Guinoua and plains, Cohoro.
Sapuana ..	Garina ..	Hen	Plains, Guarero.
" ..	Cirral ..	A species of stork ..	(?)
Epinaya ..	Uyára ..	A small buck ..	Portete, Hayarure.
Juna or Pinal	Guarir ..	Fox	Only in the Macuira valley.
Parauna ..	Gforgfior or Guaruscche.	Species of vulture ..	Only in the Upper Goajira.
Umriyd ..	Mára ..	Rattlesnake	Everywhere.
Pumayd ..	Huche ..	(?)	(?)
Pijuana ..	Cfori ..	Wasp	Upper Goajira only.
Guaririn ..	Guarir ..	Fox	Only in the hills of Macuira.
Guaira or Guaraira.	Per ..	Partridge	Taroa and Upper Goajira.
Anuyaiayd ..	Anuwana ..	Species of vulture ..	Upper Goajira only.
Pamarid ..	Hepépa ..	Owl	" "
Arpushain ..	Ischú ..	Red cardinal bird ..	" "
Uriarald ..	Aro all Coaina Indians	.. ..	Cohoro hills only.
Anarajuana ..	A small, almost unknown tribe in the hills of Macuira.		
Gforgaciyd	Gforgfior or Guaruscche.	Species of vulture	Only in the hills of Upper Goajira.

[262] N.B.—The Pamurides, a very small caste, eat horseflesh and donkeys. This is considered by the other Indians to be very unclean, who, until lately, did not even eat fowls. All Indians are, however, fond of a species of lizard, "gumsher," and iguanas.

[pages 797-840 do not pertain to SC13 Goajiro]